

THE LINCOLN SCHOOL
OF TEACHERS COLLEGE

A STUDY OF STYLE
IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION
BASED UPON TEXTBOOKS

By
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A STUDY OF STYLE IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION

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PART I

ELEMENTS AND QUALITIES OF STYLE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION

In one sense of the word, style, as Baldwin points out, is not a matter of words exclusively or even primarily, but of experience with life, real and vicarious; and "in this aspect, speaking and writing are an affair not of any one book or course, but of many — of all courses and all experience; in other words, of education. . . . The vocabulary grows with the man,"¹ and precision and fluency of expression, expertness and readiness with words, mirror a precise and expert mind. Wendell, strictly delimiting the meaning of the word, calls style "the expression of thought and emotion in written words,"² but concedes inevitably to what Pater describes as the "mind or soul in style," in defining words as the "visible material symbols of that immaterial reality, thought and emotion, which make up our conscious lives,"³ and later adds that if we are sensitive enough, "every writer who is worth the name will make an impression peculiarly his own."⁴ Cardinal Newman held that speech "is essentially a personal work, . . . the expression of that one person's ideas and feelings, . . . proper to himself, in the same sense as his voice, his air, his countenance, his carriage, and his action are personal."⁵ Inasmuch as science, being universal, must use words rather as symbols, or things, while literature, the expression of personal ideas, feelings, and aspirations original to the writer, uses language as the just expression of his personality, one should look not to scientific writings but to literature for the quality

¹ C. S. Baldwin, *College Composition*, Introduction.

² Barrett Wendell, *English Composition*, p. 32.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁵ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. 273.

called style, which attends on the writer's own "inward world of thought as its very shadow." And, strangely enough, Newman seems to have regarded style as distinct from phraseology, idiom, rhythm, composition, and eloquence,⁶ as if it were some mysterious manifestation in language of that mysterious entity, soul. Perhaps some such conception, however vague or ill-defined, attaches in the minds of many to the word *style*. This idea of personality in style may be extended to include subtle manifestations of nationality in style, by which one adjudges Frenchmen different from Englishmen and Germans, and Americans different from all; and to the style of an era, by which the "gay nineties" and the "golden age" of Pope are forever set apart.

Style in another sense is often regarded as the equivalent of technical or artistic excellence, and the critic may consign an aspiring author to the limbo of those who have no style. In such conception, "style is the invariable mark of any master,"⁷ a beauty of surface, a just proportioning, a poise, a delicate yet vital symmetry between matter and manner. De Quincey seems so to have regarded it.⁸ Expression becomes expression-according-to-a-pattern, complex, intricately varied, multitudinously woven of cadences, of rhythms, of harmonies and dissonances; a pattern instinct with overtones of shifting color and changing nuances of light and shade.

The countless definitions and philosophies of style testify to the reality of its existence, although it be too elusive for the laboratory, too protean for statistical compass and rule. Even so apparently simple a description as Aristotle's, which makes style one of the three main parts of rhetoric, that part which is "the knowledge of how to say a thing,"⁹ leaves more untold than it tells. Precisely how is a thing to be said? Swift's "proper words in proper places" hardly provides an answer to the question. Lewes finds that "the principle of Beauty is only another name for Style, which is an art, incommunicable as are all other arts, but like them subordinated to laws founded on psychological conditions,"¹⁰ and Stevenson, writing on the same subject, says

⁶ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. 275.

⁷ R. L. Stevenson, "A Note on Realism," in *Essays and Criticisms*.

⁸ Thomas De Quincey, *Style*.

⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*. Translated by J. E. C. Welldon.

¹⁰ George Henry Lewes, "The Principle of Beauty," in *Principles of Success in Literature*, p. 110.

that "we shall never learn the affinities of beauty; for they lie too deep in nature and too far back in the mysterious history of man. The amateur, in consequence, will always grudgingly receive details of method, which can be stated, but can never wholly be explained."¹¹

Yet one after another, almost before they have finished their asseverations that style cannot be taught, these same men search for principles, lay down precepts, urge practice, whether, like Harrison, warning how futile for any actual results are these disquisitions on style,¹² or, like Stevenson, encouraging the belief that, "for the student who does not aspire so high as to be numbered with the giants, it is still the one quality in which he may improve himself at will. Passion, wisdom, creative force, the power of mystery or colour, are allotted in the hour of birth, and can neither be learned nor simulated. But the just and dexterous use of what qualities we have, the proportion of one part to another and to the whole, the elision of the useless, the accentuation of the important, and the preservation of a uniform character from end to end—these, which taken together constitute technical perfection, are to some degree within the reach of industry and intellectual courage."¹³ And Spencer, after remarking that good composition depends rather upon practice and natural aptitude than upon acquaintance with the laws of composition, and that a keen mind, a lively imagination, and a sensitive ear almost obviate the need of rhetorical precepts, still allows himself the hope that "some practical result may be expected from a familiarity with the principles of style. The endeavor to conform to laws may tell, though slowly. And if in no other way, yet, as facilitating revision, a knowledge of the thing to be achieved—a clear idea of what constitutes a beauty, and what a blemish—cannot fail to be of service."¹⁴

While masters of style may apprehend therein the immanence of inexpressible human individuality, and scientists may seek, like Spencer, to reduce the various maxims, dogmas, truths, which are currently regarded as helpful in the art, to something

¹¹ R. L. Stevenson, "Style in Literature," in *Essays and Criticisms*, p. 178.

¹² Frederic Harrison, "On English Prose," in *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill, and Other Literary Estimates*.

¹³ R. L. Stevenson, "A Note on Realism," in *Essays and Criticisms*, p. 232.

¹⁴ Herbert Spencer, *The Philosophy of Style*, p. 10.

like scientific ordination under a general principle, there remains for rhetoricians the determination of the component aspects of that skill whereby men express themselves effectively in words. For even the most obscure and complicated of arts, once it has been resolved into its component elements, its various aspects differentiated one from another, becomes in some degree comprehensible to ordinary intelligence. Instead of being a practice under occult control, possible only to the inspired and those "~~born with a gift for words~~," it shows itself a skill in some measure within the reach of all. No one would maintain that a knowledge of the principles of rhetoric can be substituted for natural talent. But for the great mass of people, those who have no particular aptitude with words, the only impelling concern with composition is with those aspects of it by which they are helped to more effective communication in speech and writing. Here educational practice and the critical theories of the rhetoricians meet.

Here too the stylists are at one with those who teach, agreeing, Dogberry to the contrary, that speaking and writing do not come by nature. The power of expression grows by cultivation, ceaseless, tireless. "That style is the most perfect, not, as fools say, which is the most natural, for the most natural is the disjointed babble of the chronicler; but which attains the highest degree of elegant and pregnant implication unobtrusively; or, if obtrusively, then with the greatest gain to sense and vigour."¹⁵ . . . "Here, then, is work worth doing and worth trying to do well, . . . difficult to do well and possible to do better every year; . . . calling for scrupulous thought . . . and hence a perpetual education."¹⁶ It is no easy trick to speak out simply and naturally and clearly. It requires something more than the desire "To thine own self be true." Of this Newman was thinking when, after arguing that style is "the contemporaneous off-spring of the emotion or imagination" which possesses the individual writer, a manifestation of unique selfhood as inescapable as his shadow, he paused to consider how even genius must labour to say what it has to say in such a way as will most exactly and suitably express it. "I cannot grant, notwithstanding, that

¹⁵ R. L. Stevenson, "Style in Literature," in *Essays and Criticisms*, p. 138.

¹⁶ R. L. Stevenson, "The Morality of the Profession of Letters," in *Essays and Criticisms*, p. 177.

genius may not improve by practice,—that it never incurs failures, and succeeds the second time,—that it never finishes off at leisure what it has thrown off in the outline at a stroke. . . . Now, is it wonderful that that pen of his should sometimes be at fault for a while,—that it should pause, write, erase, re-write, amend, complete, before he satisfies himself that his language has done justice to the conceptions which his mind's eye contemplated?"¹⁷ If for men of genius writing involves such labour that the style should neither outrun nor lag behind the meaning and the occasion, how much in need of help does the rest of mankind stand!

For teachers, however, the problem of style is not to determine, among so many varied conceptions, which is the true inward meaning of the word, nor yet to reconcile divergent theories of men of letters. Accepting a working definition of it as "the expression of thought and feeling in written words,"¹⁸ the teacher's problem is to devise some method, or methods, of practical instruction by which pupils in the schools may learn to produce the reality. "Effective communication," to use Baldwin's phrase,—how best may it be achieved by the rank and file of those who attend the schools? Instruction in style in the so-called higher sense, that style which Newman held inevitable to genius and which Harrison reiterated was incapable of being taught,¹⁹ does not devolve upon the teacher. Whether it be his good fortune or his ill, rarely if ever is imposed upon the teacher the obligation of being a light unto the pen of genius. The mute, inglorious Miltons are overwhelmingly outnumbered in the classroom by the Johns and Marys who stand ever in need of learning to express themselves first with greater clarity and next with whatever measure of power, appropriate to the subject, they can achieve. But, indeed, just this precisely is what those to whom the fates (or that equally efficacious, if less romantic donor, heredity) have brought rich endowment of talent, must learn. To make bright and lucid that which is dim and obscure to the understanding, and to make fresh and vigorous that which might otherwise compel but flagging interest,—these are the two functions of all style: the style of Mary explaining how she earned

¹⁷ John Henry Newman, "Literature," in *The Idea of a University*, p. 284.

¹⁸ Barrett Wendell, *English Composition*, p. 39.

¹⁹ Frederic Harrison, "On English Prose," in *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill, and Other Literary Estimates*.

some money, of John writing a letter wherein he sets forth his qualifications for the position for which he is an applicant, and of Milton praying the heavenly Muse to inspire his

• "adventurous song

That, with no middle flight, intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in 'prose or rhyme.'"

For all good writing, of whatever kind, possesses two of the three great virtues in common: it has clarity, and it has force. Description, narration, exposition, argumentation—to use those unsatisfactory but familiar categories—must all be clear and effective.

The third great virtue in style, beauty, may from one point of view be held inappropriate to certain kinds of writing—to party platforms, for instance, or business letters. If, however, beauty be considered as the adaptation of the expression to the meaning, then in the very appropriateness of the phrase to the idea, in the integrity of the phrase, that is, there is an inherent beauty. It is the striving after artistic effects which overleap the reality to fall upon absurdity that makes the society columns of the newspaper so often a source of amusement to the more sophisticated reader. Beauty is not purchased by the weight, either in false phrases or in false tresses; in the deepest sense it must *belong* to that which it adorns, else it be not beauty.

Utilitas, dignitas, venustas the ancients required of their architecture; clearness, force, beauty the rhetoricians require of expression. It was easier, perhaps, to embody canons in marble in the days that are gone than now to give them form and substance in a living language; or so, after what often seems discouragingly futile effort, the teacher of English is sometimes tempted to believe. Even Herbert Spencer concluded that instruction and precepts avail comparatively little in acquiring skill and power of expression unless there be some natural aptitude. And yet, in spite of discouragements, the experience of the great body of teachers is that, given a sufficiently long period of time, students do grow in control of language as a medium of expression. How much of the increased power is to be attributed to a knowledge of the principles of style is, of course, an open question.

That rhetoricians and teachers have faith in the efficacy of a

knowledge of the elements and qualities of good style is evident from an examination of textbooks in English composition. Despite great diversity in the method of presentation, despite enormous differences in emphasis and widely varying requirements and suggestions for applying and practicing the principles, a study of the books revealed that they not only set forth the specific aspects, characteristics, qualities of effective written composition, but that there exists a very close agreement among them as to what those aspects, characteristics, and qualities are. Twenty-five school textbooks in language and composition were analyzed, including three different sets (ten volumes) of language books for elementary school use (grade three to grade seven, inclusive), three books for junior high school, eleven for senior high school, and one for college level. The books chosen are all in wide use in schools to-day; they are recent; they have much to recommend them to the thoughtful teacher; and they represent a wide variety of method and material. Leaving aside the more or less mechanical matters of punctuation, grammar, spelling, correct sentence structure, with which this study is not concerned, a check list was made, enumerating the aspects in which, according to these textbooks, good writing differs from poor. The fourteen high school books were used as basis for the check list, a count showing the amount of agreement among them. The list was then used for the elementary school and college textbooks to obtain some indication of the extent to which the items taught are considered suitable to the other school levels. Because there was apparent such close agreement among the books as to the qualities of composition which it is desirable to teach, it seemed needless to examine more than the twenty-five books to determine what teachers and rhetoricians consider needful or helpful elements and qualities in effective written expression. However, it was held of value to compare the list of principles thus obtained with those which two scholarly yet diverse treatises on style consider cogent. These were *The Philosophy of Style*, by Herbert Spencer, and *English Composition*, by Barrett Wendell.

The analysis of the high school textbooks provided the materials for the following outline, the arrangement of which conforms in general to the order of Barrett Wendell's treatment of the elements of style, although the outline excludes aspects which he

discusses but which were not found mentioned in the books under consideration. The figure following each of the items of the outline indicates how many of the fourteen high school textbooks present that element or quality of style as important in written composition.

A. ELEMENTS OF STYLE

I. Words

- a. Good usage: grammatical purity: freedom from [14]
 1. Barbarisms (Words not in the English language; for example, *hish* and *hern* for *his* and *hers*, *gooses* for *geese*, *goodest* for *best*.)
 2. Improperities (Words used with meanings different from those assigned by good use; for example, "Let him *lay* there," *exceptionable* for *exceptional*, *enormity* for *enormousness*.)
 3. Provincialisms (Local or regional terms; for example, "I *reckon* so," for "I think so.")
 4. Technical terms
 5. Obsolete words
 6. Slang
- b. Choice of kinds of words so as
 1. Accurately to express the meaning intended [14]
 2. Adequately to achieve the effect desired [14]
 - (a) Long or short, for grandiloquence or simplicity [11]
 - (b) Specific or general, for distinct pictures or generalized ideas [14]
 - (c) Concrete or abstract, for vivid images or generalized ideas [14]
 - (d) Figurative or literal, for vivid and suggestive impressions or unsuggestive effects [14]
 3. Successfully to avoid trite phrases and the pretentiousness of "high-flown language" [10]
- c. Choice of number of words so as best to achieve the effect desired, whether it be one of compactness or of intentional diffuseness, using no more words than are needed to secure such effect (i.e., the deletion of unnecessary words) [14]
- d. Skillful variation in the kinds and numbers of words [13]
- e. Choice of words for connotation (suggestiveness or implication) so as to arouse in the mind of the reader a set of suggestions as nearly as possible akin to those in the mind of the writer [10]

II. Sentences

- a. Good usage: freedom from solecisms (grammatical blunders, such as "*Who did you see?*"); and the correct use of idioms [14]
- b. Choice of kinds of sentences so as best to achieve the effect desired
 1. Loose and periodic sentences (In a periodic sentence the sense is suspended until the end. Sentences in which this is not the case are termed loose. "After hours of waiting, during which his hopes swung from one to the other alternative, the decision was reported," is a periodic sentence. "He waited for many hours, and in the period of waiting his hopes swung from one to the other alternative before the decision was reported," is a loose sentence. Very broadly speaking, a predominance of periodic sentences is better.) [12]
 2. Long and short sentences (Very broadly speaking, a predominance of short periodic sentences results in a style more satisfactory than that produced by a predominance of long and loose ones.) [13]
 3. Balanced structure, in so far as idiomatic freedom allows [9]
- c. Variety in kind and length of sentences [14]
- d. Employment of principles of composition in sentence [14]
 1. Unity (Every sentence should group itself about one central idea, including what is to the point and excluding what is not.) [14]
 - (a) Avoidance of too long sentences [13]
 - (b) Avoidance of unnecessary shifts of subject [8]
 2. Mass: emphasis: force [14]
 - (a) End with words that deserve distinction [9]
 - (b) Use balance and antithesis as aids to mass [12]
 - (c) Use unusual word order for emphasis [7]
 - (d) Use active rather than passive voice [7]
 - (e) Use verbs and nouns for description rather than rely too much on adjectives [7]
 3. Coherence (The relation of each part of the sentence to every other part should be unmistakable.) [14]
 - (a) Order of words [13]
 - (b) Constructions (Phrases similar in significance should be similar in form.) [10]

- (c) Precise use of connectives (Coördinate and subordinate conjunctions, relative pronouns, conjunctive adverbs, words of reference such as *therefore, however*, etc.) [13]
- 4. Denotation (Definitely identify the idea.) [14]
- 5. Connotation (Arouse in the mind of the reader a set of suggestions as nearly as possible akin to those in the mind of the writer.) [14]

III. Paragraphs

- a. Variety in paragraphs [2]
- b. Employment of the principles of composition in the paragraph
 - 1. Unity (Every paragraph should group itself about one central idea.) [14]
 - (a) Avoidance of incongruous matters within the paragraph
 - (b) Arrangement of the paragraph according to some plan [11]
 - 2. Mass: emphasis (The chief parts of the paragraph should be so placed as readily to catch the eye. If the effect of indecision is desired, deliberately weaken the mass.) [14]
 - (a) Place the most important ideas at the beginning and end of the paragraph [11]
 - (b) Maintain due proportion between principal and subordinate matters [10]
 - (c) End with words that deserve distinction [9]
 - 3. Coherence (The relation of each part of the paragraph to the context should be unmistakable. If the effect of confusion is desired, disregard the principle of coherence.) [14]
 - (a) Order of sentences (Matters closely related in thought should be kept together; matters distinct in thought, kept apart.) [14]
 - (b) Constructions
 - (1) Parallel construction: balance, antithesis [12]
 - (2) Skilful repetition [10]
 - (3) Variety of construction [13]
 - (4) Avoidance of needless shifts in [5]
 - (i) Subject [2]
 - (ii) Voice [2]

- (c) Precise use of connectives and words of reference [13]
 - (1) Distinguish between coördinate and subordinate matter [10]
 - (2) Use no more *ands* and *buts* than necessary, preferring connectives in the body of the clause to initial ones [4]
 - 4. Denotation (Definitely identify the ideas.) [14]
 - 5. Connotation (Arouse in the mind of the reader a set of suggestions as nearly as possible akin to those in the mind of the writer.) [14]
- V. *Whole compositions* (Books, chapters, and smaller units of writing, including letters: exposition, narration, description, drama, argumentation.)
 - a. Employment of the principles of composition in the whole
 - 1. Unity (Every composition should group itself about one central idea. If rambling or other vague effect is desired, disregard the principle of unity.) [14]
 - (a) Selection of essential and relevant matters [14]
 - (b) Repression of irrelevant and incongruous matters [14]
 - (c) Arrangement of materials according to some definite plan (Observance of chronological or place order, of point of view in circumstance, etc.) [14]
 - 2. Mass: emphasis (If effect of indecision, weakness, anticlimax, is desired, disregard the principle of mass.) [14]
 - (a) Beginning: Avoid wandering, irrelevant beginning [13]
 - (b) Ending
 - (1) Avoid continuing after the real end is reached [13]
 - (2) Avoid anticlimax [7]
 - (3) End with words that deserve distinction [9]
 - (c) Proportion (Observe due proportion between important and unimportant matters.) [14]
 - (d) Skilful repetition for the sake of emphasis [9]
 - 3. Coherence (The relation of each part of the composition to the context should be unmistakable. If an effect of confusion is desired, disregard the principle of coherence.) [14]

- (a) Arrangement of parts [14]
- (b) Constructions [14]
- (c) Connectives [12]
 - (1) Definitely marked transitions [12]
 - (2) Carefully placed summaries [6]
- 4. Denotation (Definitely identify the ideas.) [14]
- 5. Connotation (Arouse in the minds of the readers [14]

sets of suggestions as nearly as possible akin to those in the mind of the writer.)

B. QUALITIES OF STYLE

- I. *Clearness*, the intellectual quality of style (Style must so express the writer's meaning that no rational reader or hearer can have any doubt as to what the meaning is.) [14]
 - a. Avoid
 - 1. Ambiguity of phrase [14]
 - 2. Vagueness of
 - (a) Thought [14]
 - (b) Phrase [14]
 - 3. Obscurity
 - (a) Confused thought [14]
 - (b) Inapt diction (technical terms, foreign terms, etc.) [5]
 - 4. Needless repetition, tautology [10]
 - 5. Too long sentences [13]
 - b. Phrase accurately [14]
 - c. Use terms sufficiently specific [14]
 - d. Use terms sufficiently concrete [14]
 - e. Keep the point of view (physical, mental, or both) clear [14]
 - f. Use no more words than are justified [14]
 - g. Follow the principles of
 - 1. Unity [14]
 - (a) Have a plan [14]
 - (b) Select essential and relevant matters [14]
 - (c) Repress unnecessary and irrelevant matters [14]
 - 2. Mass: Apply the principle of mass in proportioning materials [14]
 - 3. Coherence: Make unmistakable the relations of the elements of the composition to each other and to the context [14]
- II. *Force*, the emotional quality of style (The distinguishing quality of a style that holds the attention.) [14]

- a. Choose elements for their power of
 - 1. Denotation, for clearness [14]
 - 2. Connotation, for suggestiveness [14]
 - (a) Figurative language [14]
 - (b) Allusions [2]
- b. Cultivate powers of perception [7]
- c. Strike out needless words [14]
- III. *Beauty*, the aesthetic quality of style (The distinguishing quality of a style which pleases the taste.) [9]
 - a. Adaptation of the expression to the meaning [14]
 - b. Euphony (Smoothness or pleasantness of the sound qualities of the words and sentences.) [7]
 - c. Rhythm (Movement of phrases, sentences, and of the whole.) [9]
 - d. Picture-making power [14]
 - e. Variety in the length of elements [14]
 - f. Variety in the form of elements [14]
 - g. Directness and sincerity of phrase (as opposed to pretentiousness, triteness, and "high-flown language") [10]

Spencer, Wendell, and Baldwin ²⁰ point out a few other principles of style which do not find a place in the high school textbooks. Their omission from these books implies neither that the principles are unimportant nor that teachers of high school rhetoric are unacquainted with them. It does imply, however, that certain elements of style demand more knowledge or skill than high school pupils are likely to possess, and probably that those principles are not so fundamental as are others. It is for the same reasons, no doubt, that while the high school textbooks are unanimous as to the necessity of accurate words, good usage, and a number of other characteristics of style, only nine of the fourteen books note beauty and rhythm, only seven note euphony, and only two, variety in form and length of paragraphs and the use of allusions, to speak of typical differences. Not only are most high school pupils unable to make use of allusions in their own writing; they are generally unable to recognize them when someone else uses them. The appreciation of allusions requires first of all a familiarity with the sources from which they are drawn, a familiarity born of wide reading and retentive memory, and second, a discriminating perception of how the allusion, overt or subtle,

²⁰ C. S. Baldwin, *College Composition*.

enhances the meaning, plays like a lambent flame over the surface of the phrase, and illumines far, dim reaches of thought and vision with quickening power and beauty. How many persons of the thousands who read Woodrow Wilson's speech at the time of the entrance of the United States into the World War heard reëcho in his magnificent concluding sentence the words of the militant German priest, Martin Luther, steadfastly refusing to traffic with evil?

Or take something less abstruse, less literary than the matter of suggestion by allusion; take the matter of variety in form and length of paragraphs. There must be paragraphs before there can be any attempt to vary them. And, once pupils master the principle of the paragraph, variety can almost certainly be trusted to come in due order, unbid. Indeed, it would probably be much more difficult to construct a series of paragraphs monotonously similar in form and length than to achieve variety. Take the matter of choice between Latin and Saxon words. Shall the high school student not more wisely seek the epithet which exactly conveys his meaning, without too much troubling whether it had its origin in classical Rome or in some chill northern region where words, like life, were simple and direct? Again, there is the matter of figures of speech. It were obviously too much to expect the average high school pupil, even if he understood the logical and philosophical bases for selection of tropes, to subject his figures of speech to so rigid an analysis as is below implied. Rather would he eschew them altogether. Better that he should learn to use them occasionally, without too much inquiry into their rhetorical profundities. The teaching of composition in the schools is not to inculcate a knowledge of the laws of rhetoric as such; it is to guide and provide opportunity for growth in ability to realize, order, and present ideas.

The principles of style which are discussed by the more scholarly treatments but are not given place in the high school textbooks are:

1. Freedom from foreign words, inasmuch as they tend to make the meaning less clear.
2. The use of Latin or Saxon words to achieve the effect of grandiloquence or simplicity

3. The securing of greater unity in sentence, paragraph, and the whole by avoidance of
 - (a) Unnecessary shifts of subject
 - (b) Unnecessary shifts of predicate
 - (c) Unnecessary accumulation of subjects
 - (d) Unnecessary accumulation of predicates
 - (e) Parentheses
 - (f) Undue specification
 - (g) Breaking the discourse into needlessly small fragments
 - (h) Long and numerous suspensions of thought or image
4. The securing of greater force in the sentence by such sequence of words as suggests the constituents of the thought in the order most convenient for building up that thought. (This principle is in reality the principle of coherence applied as a means of securing greater effectiveness through the most advantageous collocation of substantives and adjectives, verbs and other modifiers.)
5. The selection of figures of speech which:
 - (a) Can be easily understood
 - (b) Are broadly human in appeal
 - (c) Are drawn from actual experience

The language books for elementary school use are, properly enough, concerned with many fewer precepts of style than are the books for older students. The emphasis is overwhelmingly upon correct usage in words and in sentence structure, correct use of idiom, the arrangement of words in complete sentences rather than in segments of sentences, and the recognition of the bounds of the single sentence. So much of space and time given to mere correction of errors is all too certain sign that the field of the English language in America is upgrown with weeds and nettles, hardily persisting, decade after decade, in spite of continuous croppings. Were correct usage established, the fruits of the precepts of style might well be more abundant.

The following aspects of style are definitely presented in all three sets of the language books examined, though not necessarily in all volumes of each set. The more elementary the grade, the fewer the precepts presented. The more advanced books review the principles given in preceding volumes, make them more specific and of wider application, and add thereto new principles. Observance of the following principles, it may be assumed, is

fundamental to connected discourse which achieves a reasonable measure of clarity and power:

1. Correct usage (Purity of diction and grammatical correctness.)
2. Accurate words
3. Variety in sentences
4. Emphasis (force) in sentence, paragraph, and in the whole
- * 5. Unity (Limit the subject, keep to the subject, and tell enough facts to make it clear.)
6. Effective beginning
7. Definite conclusion
8. Avoidance of awkward repetition
9. Use of picture-making words
10. Precision in use of pronouns

In consideration of the former outline, it may be said, with Wendell and Baldwin, that paragraph unity and the unity of the whole apply in reality not so much to style, not to the wording of the finished form, but to the planning of separate phases of thought; and that, as a matter of fact, paragraph unity is only a means to the coherence of the whole. So also with certain other elements listed under "style." The beginning, the ending, and the proportion by which the principle of mass obtains are just as truly matters of materials as of manner of presentation. The style, one may object, is not dependent upon the writer's keeping his physical point of view clear; nor does the "cultivation of the powers of perception" apply to the style. It has to do with the man himself. On the other hand, no one of these principles but influences directly or indirectly the style of the writer. The concern of the teachers and rhetoricians who analyze style into its component elements that pupils in school may come into clear possession of the idea, is to include all helpful details whatsoever that serve to give substance to so intangible, so uncertain a thing as style proves itself to be even under the hands of the masters. Probably there has been no analysis ever made which covered all the aspects of style, covered them completely, clearly, and brought them all to logical fusion under a single conception of the word. Even if all rhetoricians were to be brought to agreement upon a single definition of the word and upon uniform constituents of the reality, there would still remain an almost inevitable disagreement as to the relative values of the facts. Who would be

competent to judge whether constructions or arrangement of parts is more essential to coherence, or whether euphony or rhythm lends more to the beauty of the composition? But even were the laws all agreed upon and set forth to the ultimate scientific detail, a knowledge of them could no more insure success in use than a knowledge of the scales portends success in singing.

For as one studies the outline of elements and qualities of style, one of the two things in particular which strikes the attention is that teachers regard style less as a matter of technical excellence than as honest, accurate, effective expression of the feelings and ideas of the writer. Style thus conceived is the expression of the writer's mind, and not a garment to be put on at will. There is nothing of the masquerade about it. There is no set pattern to be imitated. There are no rules which can be applied mechanically. The style is the embodiment of the individual's thoughts and emotions. If the visible shape conforms to the principles of good style, then the writing is good; if it violates them, the result is bad. Sincerity is prerequisite to any adequate relationship between ideas and expression; or rather the composition of ideas and the expression of them are almost inextricably one. A knowledge of the rules of construction may prevent blundering; it may effect an increase in power. Initiation into the secrets of style may help many to write with some degree of accuracy; it may help a few to write with some measure of felicity. And if textbooks err in an occasional inclusion of something which the logician claims to fall within his province instead of within the rhetorician's, they can find justification in no less a person than Quintilian: "Let care in words be solicitude in things."²¹

A second, and perhaps the most striking, aspect of the outline is what seems to be a vast deal of repetition and overlapping. The reasons therefor are apparently two. In the first place, if principles are to be made comprehensible, they must be made specific in interpretation and in application. Unity, coherence, emphasis, denotation, connotation, variety,—these are abstractions, each of which has to do in turn with words, with words composed in sentences, with sentences composed in paragraphs, and with paragraphs composed in whole compositions. There is variety in the use and kind of words, variety in the length and

²¹ Quoted in C. S. Baldwin, *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic*.

form of sentences, and variety in the length and kind of paragraphs. So with the other qualities. And it may be also that a principle operates to better advantage in one element of the composition than in another, as, for example, is true of the principle of mass. The comparatively slight bulk of the sentence and the fact that the idiom of the English language makes for the loose sentence rather than for the more emphatic periodic one mitigates against the principle of mass within the sentence.²²

A second reason for the repetition and overlapping is that the principles do actually overlap each other, though they do not coincide. As unity is a means to coherence, so, on the other hand, without coherence there can hardly be unity, in any strict sense of the word. Concrete words and specific words differ more from each other, one suspects, in the dictionary definitions than in actual fact: "Concrete,—embodied in matter, having objective reality, existing in a particular example, not abstract, denoting a thing and not a quality or state or action. (*Money, snow, deed*, are concrete as compared with the abstract *wealth, whiteness, glory*.)"²³ "Specific,—essential or belonging to a thing as a member of its species or as being what it is, appropriate to or concerned with a particular kind, of defined application or import, not general or vague. *Specific* difference, what differentiates a species; the *generic* and *specific* names of a plant; *specific* remedy, for a particular disease or organ; a *specific* promise, statement; lent for a *specific* purpose, etc."²⁴ Accurate words, words which are precise, fitted exactly to express the meaning of the writer, may or may not be concrete and specific. And the connotative power of words, that power they have of implying or suggesting more than they actually mean, that subtle kind of halo that invests them, making a word like *rose* not simply a name for a prickly shrub bearing a certain kind of flower, but an epithet which brings to mind a host of suggestions—suggestions of youth and spring and romance, or, it may be, of the worm in the bud and of a nicotine admixture guaranteed to destroy slugs in the garden—surely connotation is an inescapable factor in "accuracy." Why not, then, be satisfied with the single requirement of precision in words? Because to do so were to presume without war-

²² Barrett Wendell, *English Composition*, p. 37.

²³ *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, p. 160. ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 798.

rant upon the ability of the untrained mind to differentiate, to resolve a complex and difficult art into its component aspects. In similar fashion, other elements of style might be shown to overlap each other, to prove themselves but different facets for refracting Voltaire's summation of "each phrase in its right place."

However, the outline as it stands, useful though it may be for the explication of the meaning of style to high school pupils, is yet too repetitious and too detailed for practicable use as a check list in judging the style of a given composition. Condensation and elimination of what seems to be undue specification (for example, under *Ending*: "Avoid continuing after the real end is reached; avoid anticlimax; end with words that deserve distinction") resulted in a much shorter and simpler list.

CHECK LIST FOR CHARACTERISTICS OF STYLE

I. *Good Usage*

- 1a. Words in good usage
- 1b. Grammatical purity in sentences

II. *Clearness*

- 2a. Accurate words
- 2b. Specific words
- 2c. Concrete words
- 3a. Absence of needless repetition and tautology

A. *Unity*

- 4a. Sentence unity
- 5a. Selection of essential and relevant matters within the paragraph
- 5b. Repression of unessential and irrelevant matters within the paragraph
- 5c. Arrangement of the paragraph according to some plan
- 6a. Selection of essential and relevant matters within the whole
- 6b. Repression of unessential and irrelevant matters within the whole
- 6c. Arrangement of the whole according to some plan
- 7a. Avoidance of too long sentences

B. *Mass*

- 8a. Mass (emphasis) within the sentence
- 9a. Due proportion between principal and subordinate matters within the paragraph
- 9b. Placement of most important ideas at beginning and end of paragraph

- 10a. Due proportion between principal and subordinate matters within the whole
- 10b. Effective beginning
- 10c. Effective conclusion
- 11a. Skilful repetition for the sake of emphasis
- 11b. Parallel structure: balance and antithesis

C. *Coherence*

- 12a. Coherent order of words within the sentence
- 12b. Coherent constructions within the sentence
- 12c. Precise use of connectives within the sentence
- 13a. Coherence in order of sentences within the paragraph
- 13b. Coherence in arrangement of the parts of the paragraph
- 14a. Coherence in arrangement of the parts of the whole
- 14b. Precise use of words of reference: definitely marked transitions

III. *Force*

- 15a. Denotative power
- 15b. Connotative power
- 15c. Figurative language
- 15d. Use of no more words than justified

IV. *Beauty*

- 16a. Adaptation of the expression to the meaning
- 16b. Variety in the use of words
- 16c. Variety in the form of sentences
- 16d. Variety in the length of sentences
- 17a. Absence of trite phrases and pretentious language
- 18a. Picture-making power
- 19a. Euphony
- 19b. Rhythm

Here, then, are practical factors which teachers and rhetoricians agree constitute a substantial explanation of style. That something of the reality escapes in the analysis, eludes the plumbing finger, nobody will deny. Some threads in the visible texture of thought can be frayed out, held up for inspection and study, made to subserve the needs of the most unpracticed novice. Little of whatever else, swift as a shadow, imponderable as the lightning in the collied night, makes up the body of the fabric, can be got from classroom precept.

PART II

STATISTICAL FINDINGS FROM RATINGS OF ELEMENTS AND QUALITIES OF STYLE

Now, a check list having been made of the elements and qualities of style which it is widely attempted to teach in the secondary schools of the country, it seemed desirable to ascertain if possible whether these elements and qualities were capable of identification in specific compositions, and, if they were, to what extent competent judges agreed as to the varying amounts in which they existed in different compositions. For this purpose, twenty-six compositions were chosen, seventeen from the Van Wagenen¹ and nine from the Leonard Scales.² These two, rather than any other scales, were taken because they endeavor to evaluate what Leonard calls the "elements of purely composition quality," and exclude the more or less mechanical matters of form, punctuation, spelling, and conventional "grammatical errors," with which this study is not concerned. The scale values of the compositions selected ranged from scale-step .34 to 10.0. In the final correlations of the judges' ratings, however, the five compositions with scale value less than 2.4 were disregarded, since they were too short to admit of opportunity for containing all the elements and qualities enumerated. A composition which consists of only one or two or three sentences can hardly be rated for variety of sentence length, variety of sentence form, effective beginning, effective conclusion, or arrangement according to some plan.

To these twenty-six compositions was added an excerpt, complete in itself, from each of the following: "Pan's Pipes," by Robert Louis Stevenson; "The Hours of Sleep," by Alice Meynell; *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, by Walter Pater; and *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, by Thomas Carlyle. Three of these four are consummate stylists; and the fourth, Carlyle, a writer of unmistakable power, whether his style be approved or disapproved. It is from the practice of great artists that the laws of

¹ M. J. Van Wagenen, *English Composition Scales*.

² S. A. Leonard, *A Scale for the Judgment of Composition Quality Only*.

the art are derived—laws which masters of rhetoric, critics of literature, and teachers of English composition maintain are the same for all good writing, being founded upon psychological conditions. This is not to say that great talent may not modify the laws, shape them to its own individual bent, nor that genius may not discover new laws. Nor is it to say that all the practices of even the greatest artists should be considered as sources for principles of the art. Renown may lend lustre even to defects in the work of a master, which tyros, emulating, may mistake for springs of power. Nor, again, is it to say that the worth of a man's style is wholly to be measured by the constancy with which he adheres to the principles, and the number of them which he succeeds in fulfilling. Something more than the fulfillment of the law, somewhat over and above a summation of parts, is requisite to greatness. It is with style somewhat as with the clock which the small boy takes apart. Wheels and screws, rivets and springs—they do not necessarily make a clock when he puts them together again. However, these passages from men of letters like Stevenson and Pater and the others ought, unless critics and rhetoricians be mistaken, excellently to illustrate at least some of the principles of style here enumerated.

The compositions and excerpts, with no distinguishing marks which might tend to influence the readers' judgments of their merits, were arranged in chance order, numbered, and given to six experienced teachers of high school English. As a matter of fact, one of the judges did recognize the paragraph from Pater, but said that did not bias his judgment. Working independently, and not as a group, each teacher rated each of the thirty compositions for each of twenty-seven items, according to the following directions:

"Below are listed a number of elements or aspects of style in written composition. On a scale ranging from 0 to 10.0, rate the compositions for each of these elements. For example, if the words of the composition seem entirely inaccurate, wholly unfitted to express the writer's meanings, it should receive a rating of 0 for *accurate words*. If the words seem precisely suited to the expression of the ideas, so that no more accurate words could be found for them, the composition should receive the highest rating on the scale, 10.0, for that item. The scale-steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are to be used to indicate the degrees ranging between

non-existence of the quality (0) and its existence in the highest degree (10); that is, for any given element or quality, a composition may be rated anywhere from 0, or 1, or 2, up to 10.0.

"It is better to judge all the compositions as a series for each item separately; that is, to rate all the compositions of the series for *accurate words* before going on to consider *specific words*; for *specific words* before considering *concrete words*; and so on through the list.

"So far as possible it is desired that the reader will not allow his judgment of the scale-value of any one item or element to be influenced by his judgment of any other item or element, nor to be influenced by the intrinsic interest or value of the subject matter, the length of the composition, nor by any errors in mechanics, grammar, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, etc."

CHECK LIST OF ELEMENTS AND QUALITIES OF STYLE

I. *Clearness*

- 1a. Accurate words
- 1b. Specific words (vs. general, generic, or vague words. *Fox-terrier: terrier: dog: animal*)
- 1c. Concrete words (vs. abstract words. *Money; wealth; snow: whiteness*)
- 2a. Absence of needless repetition and tautology

Unity

- 3a. Selection of essential and relevant matters
- 3b. Repression of unessential and irrelevant matters
- 3c. Arrangement according to some plan
- 4a. Avoidance of too long sentences

Mass

- 5a. Due proportion between principal and subordinate matters
- 5b. Effective beginning
- 5c. Effective conclusion
- 6a. Skilful repetition for emphasis
- 6b. Parallel construction: balance and antithesis

Coherence

- 7a. Order of sentences
- 7b. Arrangement of the parts of the whole
- 7c. Precise use of words of reference: definitely marked transitions

II. *Force*

- 8a. Connotative power: suggestion

8b. Use of no more words than are justified

8c. Figurative language

III. *Beauty*

9a. Adaptation of the expression to the meaning

10a. Variety in the use of words

10b. Variety in the form of sentences

• 10c. Variety in the length of sentences

11a. Absence of trite phrases and pretentious language

12a. Picture-making power

13a. Euphony (Smoothness or pleasantness of the sound qualities of the words and sentences.)

13b. Rhythm (Movement of phrases, sentences, and of the whole.)

It will be observed that the above check list, which accompanied the compositions, omits details having to do with correct usage. Unquestionably good usage is the basis of all style in writing; but the aspects of style which come under that heading have already been subjected to analysis in various studies,³ and particularly in relation to some five or six hundred scaled compositions.⁴ Certain aspects of style having to do only with the sentence as such, namely, sentence unity, coherent order of words and coherent constructions within the sentence, were also omitted, since they had been the subject of a previous study.⁵ And, because most of the compositions contained only one or two paragraphs, the details concerned with paragraph unity, mass, and coherence were not considered apart from unity, mass, and coherence of the whole composition.

Setting aside the five compositions which were too brief to allow adequate opportunity for rating, there remained twenty-five compositions, including the four passages from professional authors. For each of these twenty-five compositions, there were the ratings of six different judges for each of twenty-seven items; that is, for each composition, six different judgments of the scale value of the

³ R. L. Lyman, *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*, pp. 21, 83, 85, 86, 90, 100, 105, 115, 120.

⁴ Percival M. Symonds and Baldwin Lee, "Studies in the Learning of English Expression," *Teachers College Record*, XXX, pp. 461-80, 686-92; XXXI, pp. 50-58.

Percival M. Symonds and Alice V. Wall, *An Unpublished Study of Grammatical Usage in Scaled Compositions*.

⁵ Percival M. Symonds and Helen Fern Daringer, *An Unpublished Study of Sentence Structure in Scaled Compositions*.

composition with respect to its use of *accurate words*; six judgments of its use of *specific words*; six judgments of its use of *concrete words*; six judgments as to the *absence of needless repetition and tautology* within the composition; six judgments as to its *selection of essential and relevant matters* and its *repression of unessential and irrelevant matters*; and, similarly, six ratings for each of the other items. For each composition there were 162 ratings in all; a total of 4,050 ratings for the twenty-five compositions.

Using an adaptation of the Pearson formula for the coefficient of correlation suitable to calculation by machine,⁶

$$r = \frac{\Sigma x^2 + \Sigma y^2 - \Sigma (x-y)^2 - \frac{\Sigma x \Sigma y}{\frac{1}{2}N}}{2 \sqrt{\Sigma x^2 - \frac{(\Sigma x)^2}{N}} \sqrt{\Sigma y^2 - \frac{(\Sigma y)^2}{N}}}$$

the intercorrelations of the ratings of the six judges for each style item were computed. Fifteen intercorrelations were computed for each of the twenty-seven style items: judge A's ratings for *accurate words* were correlated in turn with the ratings for *accurate words* of judge B, judge C, judge D, judge E, and judge F; judge B's ratings for *accurate words*, with those of C, D, E, and F; C's ratings, with those of D, E, and F; D's, with those of E and F; and E's ratings with those of F. In like manner the intercorrelations of the ratings of the six judges were found for each of the other twenty-six elements and qualities of style, making a total of 405 coefficients of correlation.

The average was found for each series of fifteen coefficients of correlation, as in Table I.

The judges, it is apparent, most nearly agreed in their ratings of variety in the use of words in the different compositions, the average for the coefficients of correlations of their ratings being high for that item, .85; and they were least agreed upon the absence of trite phrases and pretentious language, the average for which approaches 0. There was very little agreement for certain other items: the use of no more words than are justified, concrete words, the repression of unessential and irrelevant matters,

⁶ Percival M. Symonds, "Variations of the Product-Moment (Pearson) Coefficient of Correlation," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, XVII, pp. 458-67, October, 1926.

TABLE I

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR RATINGS

Average of Coefficients of Correlations of Ratings of Six Judges for Each Item

ITEMS	AVERAGE OF CORRELA- TIONS OF RATINGS	RANK
10a. Variety in use of words.....	.85	1
8c. Figurative language.....	.73	2½
8a. Connotative power.....	.73	2½
9a. Adaptation of expression to meaning.....	.70	4
13a. Euphony.....	.69	5½
10b. Variety in form of sentences.....	.69	5½
12a. Picture-making power.....	.64	7½
5b. Effective beginning.....	.64	7½
2a. Absence of needless repetition and tautology	.60	9
10c. Variety in length of sentences.....	.59	10
13b. Rhythm.....	.58	11½
5c. Effective conclusion.....	.58	11½
3c. Arrangement according to a plan.....	.54	13
7a. Coherence in order of sentences.....	.53	14
5a. Proportion between important and sub- ordinate matters.....	.52	15½
7b. Coherence in arrangement of parts.....	.52	15½
6a. Skilful repetition for emphasis.....	.50	17
6b. Parallel structure: balance and antithesis...	.49	18
1a. Accurate words.....	.43	19
7c. Precise use of words of reference: transitions	.41	20
3a. Selection of essential and relevant matters...	.39	21
4a. Avoidance of too long sentences.....	.38	22
1b. Specific words.....	.37	23
3b. Repression of unessential and irrelevant mat- ters.....	.34	24
1c. Concrete words.....	.24	25
8b. Use of no more words than justified.....	.16	26
11a. Absence of trite phrases and pretentious language.....	.08	27

specific words, avoidance of too long sentences, and selection of essential and relevant matters. Obviously these are highly subjective aspects of composition, and in spite of frequent admonitions to pupils to use concrete and specific words, to avoid sentences which are too long, to select the important and relevant details and repress and omit the unimportant and irrelevant, these are so much matters of personal taste and opinion that competent teachers show but slight concurrence of opinion in judging how

well the precepts have been followed in specific compositions. A sentence which seems to one reader too long may not at all seem so to another. It is not unlikely that such factors as reading rate and eye-span tend to favor shorter or longer sentences, as the case may be. Moreover, longer sentences put more strain upon the attention than do shorter ones. Perhaps it is not surprising that the passage from Stevenson scored low for this item in the ratings of four of the six judges. Three of the sentences in the paragraph quoted from him have more than sixty words each, and another more than fifty. Pater, whose sentences average somewhat less in length than those of Stevenson, fared a little better in the ratings for sentence length.

For a number of the items there was substantial agreement, as the averages of the correlations indicate: figurative language, connotative power, adaptation of the expression to the meaning, euphony, and variety in the form of the sentences. The last-named characteristic, of course, can be determined by more or less mechanical examination of the structure of the sentences to discover whether they follow the same order of subject and predicate throughout, whether there is a distribution among simple, complex, and compound sentences, or whether they all follow much the same pattern in any one composition. But it is rather surprising to find certain other characteristics ranking in such close agreement, characteristics which seem to partake largely of the subjective. The judges themselves felt that there would be the least likelihood of similar ratings for connotative power, so much does the connotation depend upon the individual background of reading and experience. It is probably true, however, that well-read persons, whatever their backgrounds of actual experience with life, have in common a large vicarious experience, gained from books. Nor was such similarity to be expected among the ratings for euphony, which requires for its recognition not only training but a certain sensitivity to sound which is dependent upon innate capacity to detect tonal differences. Rhythm, with an average of coefficients of correlation only .58 as against .69 for euphony, is evidently more subjective in appeal than is the latter. And, for some undetermined reason, the ratings were measurably less in accord for effective conclusions than for effective beginnings. Perhaps it is easier to begin well than to finish.

The Spearman-Brown formula,⁷

$$r = \frac{Nr}{1 + (N-1)r},$$

was used to estimate the reliability of the ratings. If six additional judges, as competent as those who made the ratings, were to rate these compositions, how would the average of the correlations of their ratings compare with the ratings already secured? For the six highest averages, one could predict results very similar to those already obtained, for the reliability of those ratings runs from .93 up to .97 for the highest average. The nine highest averages of coefficients of correlation all have a reliability of .90 or more; and the eighteen highest, a reliability of about .85 or more. Prediction of judgments grows increasingly less certain as the averages grow less, so that there is no prophesying at all how six new judges would evaluate the last few elements. The reliability for items ranking from 19 to 22, inclusive, is .78 or more; for the last item, number 27, it is only .34. One may conclude, then, that equally competent judges would be in substantial agreement in their ratings of the compositions for variety in use of words, figurative language, connotative power, adaptation of the expression to the meaning, euphony, variety in the form of sentences, picture-making power, and effective beginnings; that they would agree less well, but still would not widely disagree, in their ratings for absence of needless repetition and tautology, variety in length of sentences, rhythm, effective conclusions, arrangement of materials according to some plan, coherence in order of sentences, maintenance of proper proportion between principal and subordinate matters, coherence in the arrangement of parts, skillful repetition for the sake of emphasis, and parallel structure, balance and antithesis. They would tend only slightly to agree upon the ratings for accurate words, precise use of words of reference and definitely marked transitions, the selection of essential and relevant matters, avoidance of too long sentences, and the use of specific words; and they would scarcely agree at all as to the repression of unessential and irrelevant matters and the use of concrete words. There would probably be no agreement as to

⁷ Henry E. Garrett, *Statistics in Psychology and Education*, p. 269.

whether the compositions used more words than were justified, or as to the absence of trite phrases and pretentious language.

The average of the ratings of the six judges for each style item for each composition was computed. These ranged from 10.0 (the highest possible average) for absence of needless repetition and tautology, coherence in order of sentences and in arrange-

TABLE II
FREQUENCY WITH WHICH AVERAGE RATINGS OF DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF
COMPOSITIONS FELL WITHIN HIGHEST OR LOWEST FIVE AVERAGES

COMPOSITION NUMBER	SCALE VALUE	NUMBER OF STYLE QUALITIES WHOSE AVERAGE RATINGS WERE AMONG THE FIVE HIGHEST
20	10	24
23	9.4	23
25	9.5	15
24	8.9	15
2	(Stevenson)	11
7	(Meynell)	10
11	8.5	9
9	(Pater)	8
30	8.2	7
8	(Carlyle)	6
27	7.6	3
15	6.6	3
13	2.4	2
1	6.0	1
19	5.9	1
29	5.7	1
14	3.0	1
		NUMBER OF STYLE QUALITIES WHOSE AVERAGE RATINGS WERE AMONG THE FIVE LOWEST
26	4.9	24
14	3.0	23
16	3.3	20
3	4.0	15
22	2.4	14
21	4.0	11
13	5.0	7
18	6.8	6
1	6.0	5
29	5.7	4
6	7.0	4
19	5.9	3
2	(Stevenson)	1

ment of parts in composition number 20, and avoidance of too long sentences in composition 14, down to 0 for skilful repetition, parallel constructions, and figurative language in composition 14; and variety and picture-making power in composition 16. For some compositions, the averages for different items were almost all consistently high; for others, low. Table II, page 29, shows the frequency with which, out of a possible twenty-seven occurrences, average ratings for different elements in any composition fell within the highest or lowest five averages.

By dividing the sum of the ratings of the six judges for the twenty-seven items of each composition by 162 (the number of judgments for each item multiplied by the number of items), the average total rating for each composition was obtained, as in Table III.

TABLE III
AVERAGE TOTAL RATINGS

RANK	COMPOSITION NUMBER	AVERAGE TOTAL RATING	SCALE VALUE
1	23	8.77	9.4
2	20	8.72	10.0
3	25	8.06	9.5
4	24	7.85	8.9
5	2	7.73	(Stevenson)
6	7	7.64	(Meynell)
7	9	7.44	(Pater)
8	30	7.27	8.2
9	11	7.14	8.5
10	8	6.89	(Carlyle)
11	27	6.74	7.6
12	15	6.52	6.6
13	12	5.14	7.3
14	6	5.12	7.0
15	19	5.04	5.9
16	18	4.83	6.8
17	1	4.74	6.0
18	29	4.46	5.7
19	13	4.10	5.0
20	21	3.92	4.0
21	3	3.73	4.0
22	22	3.33	2.4
23	16	2.78	3.3
24	26	2.59	4.9
25	14	2.14	3.0

Omitting the passages from Stevenson, Pater, Meynell, and Carlyle, and measuring, by the method of rank-differences, the correlation between the scale-values of the compositions and their total average ratings for elements of style, according to the formula,⁸

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum D^2}{N(N^2 - 1)},$$

a coefficient of correlation of .96 was obtained. The value of r , therefore, as inferred from a table,⁹ is .96, with a $PE_r = .011$. However, since the number of cases is less than thirty, the probable error of the coefficient of correlation is probably larger than the one given by the formula. Both the coefficient of correlation and the probable error should here be accepted as tentative and interpreted with caution. All that one is justified in concluding is that in this particular group of twenty-one compositions there is evidence of a very close correspondence between the scale-values of the compositions and their style-values. So high a correlation suggests that such relationship might be predicted with a fair degree of accuracy for other compositions of known scale-value, and that composition scales fairly well measure not only the mechanics, structure, and thought content of pupils' compositions, but the style as well.

For the writing of men of letters the case appears otherwise. There seems reason for inferring that the check list of elements and qualities which it is attempted to teach in the schools is not a measuring rod for the work of genius. It may be that a simple summation of ratings fails for work of great distinction because what may be regarded as a flaw by the judges subtracts disproportionately from the total value. None of the professional authors received a high rating for "avoidance of too long sentences," something in which compositions of less than mediocre quality in general scored high. Indeed, in correlations subsequently obtained between the various style elements and the total style value of the compositions, it was found that the avoidance of too long sentences apparently has no relationship to the total style value, its coefficient of correlation approaching 0.

⁸ Henry E. Garrett, *Statistics in Psychology and Education*, p. 190.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

That length of sentences, accurate words, euphony, picture-making power, the adaptation of the expression to the meaning, or any element or quality should possess the same absolute value as any other of the elements or qualities that constitute style is incredible. Some of the qualities are, no doubt, not significant and ought not be included in the total rating. For the work of amateurs, differences in the significance of the qualities seem to matter less than for the work of genius. What weight should be given to each element, however, is a problem too abstruse, too delicately intricate, for solution. And were the proper weights determined, great talent, by wresting old laws to fit new occasions, might still prove the analyst mistaken. The low coefficients of correlation obtained for some of the elements of style (avoidance of too long sentences, for example) suggest that the unreliability of the ratings for these elements is also a factor in the misplacement of the passages of distinguished prose. There could be found critics, however, who would maintain that the passage from Carlyle ranks as high as it deserves,—that his wrenching of words from their accepted meanings (the use of *wonderful*, for *surprising*), his deliberate cultivation of an irregular gait often amounting to jerkiness, his delight in harsh sounds and in phrases echoing the German idiom, his use of ellipses which are not always clear at a first reading, relegate him to a position much lower as a stylist than his place among men of letters would seem to warrant.

For the twenty-five compositions, the correlation of each style item with the total style value was computed in Table IV. The coefficients of correlation ran fairly high, ranging from .92 for adaptation of expression to meaning, picture-making power, and variety in the use of words; .90 for variety in the form of sentences; .89 for euphony, absence of needless repetition and tautology, and due proportion between important and subordinate matters; .88 for arrangement of the parts of the whole, variety in length of sentences, and effective beginning; down to .01 for avoidance of too long sentences. Some elements and qualities, there seems reason for concluding, tend closely to be related to the total style quality; others less closely related; and one, at least, seems to have no relationship to the whole. Twenty-six of the twenty-seven items had correlations whose coefficient was .47 or higher;

the twenty-seventh, .01. Twenty-two of the items had correlations of .80 or more. One should reasonably expect, then, that any composition which is good in style will possess a majority of these elements and qualities. A composition may be poor in style, however, and still have sentences which are not too long; or good, and be built of over-long sentences.

TABLE IV

CORRELATION OF ELEMENTS OF STYLE WITH THE TOTAL STYLE VALUES OF THE COMPOSITION

Adaptation of expression to meaning . . . . .	.92
Picture-making power . . . . .	.92
Variety in use of words . . . . .	.92
Variety in form of sentences . . . . .	.90
Euphony . . . . .	.89
Absence of needless repetition and tautology . . . . .	.89
Due proportion between principal and subordinate matters . . . . .	.89
Arrangement of parts of the whole . . . . .	.88
Variety in length of sentences . . . . .	.88
Effective beginning . . . . .	.88
Coherence in order of sentences . . . . .	.87
Precise use of words of reference: definitely marked transitions . . . . .	.87
Connotative power . . . . .	.86
Specific words . . . . .	.84
Concrete words . . . . .	.83
Rhythm . . . . .	.83
Use of no more words than are justified . . . . .	.82
Skilful repetition for emphasis . . . . .	.81
Selection of essential and relevant matters . . . . .	.81
Arrangement according to some plan . . . . .	.81
Effective conclusion . . . . .	.80
Parallel structure: balance and antithesis . . . . .	.80
Repression of unessential and irrelevant matters . . . . .	.59
Figurative language . . . . .	.52
Absence of trite phrases and pretentious language . . . . .	.50
Accurate words . . . . .	.47
Avoidance of too long sentences . . . . .	.01

Finally, through the generous coöperation of Mr. C. E. Jackson, the intercorrelations between the twenty-seven different style items were computed. An adaptation of the Pearson product-

moment formula for the coefficient of correlation, suitable to calculation by machine,¹⁰ was used:

$$r = \frac{\Sigma x^2 + \Sigma y^2 - \Sigma (x-y)^2 - \frac{\Sigma x \Sigma y}{\frac{1}{2}N}}{2\sqrt{\Sigma x^2 - \frac{(\Sigma x)^2}{N}} \sqrt{\Sigma y^2 - \frac{(\Sigma y)^2}{N}}}$$

Three hundred and fifty-one correlations were computed; that is, the correlations between the ratings for accurate words and specific words; between accurate words and concrete words; between accurate words and each of the other elements, were found; and, in turn, the intercorrelations for all of the other items. The average for each series of twenty-six correlations was taken. Most of the averages, as Table V shows, are fairly high, twenty of them being .74 or more; twenty-four of the twenty-seven averages, .65 or more; and all except one, above .50. That one average is only .01, for avoidance of too long sentences, which seems to show no relationship either to the total style value of the compositions or to the different elements and qualities of style here listed. Picture-making power, with an average of coefficients of correlation of .85; euphony, with an average of .83; and adaptation of expression to meaning, with an average of .81, show the most marked tendencies to be associated with the other elements and qualities of style. The use of accurate words, maintenance of due proportion between important and subordinate matters, effective beginnings, all with an average of coefficients of .80; variety in the use of words, with an average of .79; rhythm and the use of specific words, with an average of .78, likewise tend strongly to be related to the other qualities and elements of good composition. Absence of trite phrases and pretentious language, the repression of unessential and irrelevant matters, the use of figurative language, the use of parallel structure, balance and antithesis, and the use of concrete words show less relationship with the other elements and qualities, though there is still a substantial correlation between them and the other elements. Evidently these are matters not so likely to be characteristic of all good writing as are some of the others. Indeed, it is obvious that figurative language

¹⁰ Percival M. Symonds, "Variations of the Product-Moment (Pearson) Coefficient of Correlation," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, XVII, pp. 458-67, October, 1926.

TABLE V
AVERAGES OF INTERCORRELATIONS OF RATINGS

Picture-making power . . . . .	.85
Euphony . . . . .	.83
Coherence in arrangement of parts . . . . .	.82
Adaptation of expression to meaning . . . . .	.81
Accurate words . . . . .	.80
Due proportion between principal and subordinate matters . . . . .	.80
Effective beginning . . . . .	.80
Variety in use of words . . . . .	.79
Rhythm . . . . .	.78
Connotative power . . . . .	.78
Specific words . . . . .	.78
Precise use of words of reference: definitely marked transitions . . . . .	.78
Coherence in order of sentences . . . . .	.77
Variety in form of sentences . . . . .	.77
Variety in length of sentences . . . . .	.77
Effective conclusion . . . . .	.77
Absence of needless repetition and tautology . . . . .	.75
Use of no more words than justified . . . . .	.75
Selection of essential and relevant matters . . . . .	.74
Skilful repetition for emphasis . . . . .	.74
Arrangement according to some plan . . . . .	.71
Concrete words . . . . .	.68
Parallel structure . . . . .	.67
Figurative language . . . . .	.65
Repression of unessential and irrelevant matters . . . . .	.57
Absence of trite phrases and pretentious language . . . . .	.50
Avoidance of too long sentences . . . . .	.01

is not suitable to all kinds of expression, and that abstract rather than concrete words are often better fitted to express certain meanings. The generally high averages of coefficients of correlation here obtained are an indication that most of the qualities of style tend to be rather closely related to the other qualities,—a conclusion which has further evidence in the correlations previously found between the ratings for the different qualities and the total style value of the compositions. However, so similar are some of the elements of style that there is a possibility that they could not be wholly distinguished one from another, and that the ratings for the different elements were influenced by the general impression which the composition gave.

TABLE VI
INTERCORRELATIONS OF RATINGS OF THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS AND QUALITIES
TABULATION SHEET

[illegible]

A study of the correlation tables shows that certain elements tend to be very closely related: euphony and rhythm, variety in form of sentences and variety in length of sentences, variety in use of words and the adaptation of the expression to the meaning, coherence in the order of sentences and coherence in the arrangement of the parts of the whole, effective beginnings and effective conclusions. Certain other elements which might seem to have reason to be closely associated show less relationship than might have been predicted: the selection of essential and relevant matters and the repression of the unessential and irrelevant; connotative power and picture-making power; picture-making power and the absence of trite phrases and pretentious language; the absence of trite phrases and pretentious language and variety in the use of words.

A statistical analysis of the ratings of twenty-one compositions by six competent judges for twenty-seven elements or qualities of style which textbooks of English composition agree are needful or helpful in written composition indicated that the average of the ratings tends to correlate very closely with the value of the compositions as determined by composition scales. For four passages of distinguished prose, however, the averages of ratings were less satisfactory. This is probably due to the fact that some of the elements of style are comparatively insignificant (avoidance of too long sentences, for example) and tend to give too much weight to the mediocre compositions which generally succeed with them. The unreliability of the ratings is also a factor. Although the 4,050 judgments are not enough for final conclusions, there seems justification for inferring that the ratings for elements of style predict fairly well the scale values of the compositions.

The intercorrelations of the ratings of the six judges for each element (a total of 405 correlations) showed that certain elements of style are more capable of objective determination than are others: variety in the use of words, figurative language, connotative power, adaptation of expression to the meaning, euphony, and variety in the form of sentences all having an average of coefficients of correlations of ratings of .68 or more, with a reliability of .90 or more. The highest average had a reliability of .97. Other qualities showed substantial likeness in the ratings by the

different judges; others rather wide diversity; and a few little or no likeness.

The high coefficients of correlation obtained between the ratings for most of the different elements of style and the total style values of the compositions suggest that many of the elements tend to be closely related to the whole. Some, however, such as adaptation of expression to the meaning, picture-making power, variety in the use of words and in the form of sentences, euphony, maintenance of due proportion between important and subordinate matters, absence of needless repetition and tautology, coherence in the arrangement of the parts of the whole, coherence in order of sentences, and effective beginnings, show closer relationship than do such elements as figurative language, and absence of trite phrases and pretentious language. The avoidance of too long sentences apparently has no relation to the quality of the whole.

The 351 intercorrelations between the twenty-seven different elements of style bear out, by their generally high averages, the above conclusions, inasmuch as they indicate a marked tendency for many of the elements to accompany each other. That this may be due in part to overlapping of the elements with each other, so that they can not be wholly differentiated, is possible. The avoidance of too long sentences seems not to be related at all to any of the other elements.

Rhetoricians and teachers of English composition in the secondary schools are in accord as to the aspects of written composition which pupils should master; but a few of these qualities prove too tenuous to be apprehended with certainty in specific paragraphs. Others may be identified with something of assurance. Among the judgments for qualities of style, correspondence rather than diversity prevails.

APPENDIX

COMPOSITIONS USED FOR THE RATINGS

The source and scale value of each of the compositions are here given in order that the reader may the better interpret the results of the ratings. It was found necessary to disregard compositions number 4, 5, 10, 17, and 28 in the final analysis.

Compositions labelled *L.* are taken from *A Scale for the Judgment of Composition Quality Only*, by S. A. Leonard; those labelled *V. W.*, from *English Composition Scales*, by M. J. Van Wagenen.

1

MY FIRST PAIR OF SOCKS

When the war first broke out my cousin enlisted. He had been in training for about six months and he was about ready to go over. He was home on a short furlough, and he told me that the boys at the camp where he was needed socks. They had to wear cotton socks and their feet got very cold. I started a pair of socks that day. And in a little while I was down to the heel. Then there was trouble. I tried to make the heel, and I ripped it, and I tried it again, and ripped it again. Finally I put it away and wouldn't take it out again. I was thinking one day of how cold the soldiers' feet must be. So I finally took my sock out again and with hard work I finished it. The other was soon finished. And it paid me to see how my cousin liked it.

—*L.*; Scale-Step 6

2

There are moments when the mind refuses to be satisfied with evolution, and demands a ruddier presentation of the sum of man's experience. Sometimes the mood is brought about by laughter at the humorous side of life, as when, abstracting ourselves from earth, we imagine people plodding on foot, or seated in ships and speedy trains, with the planet all the while whirling in the opposite direction, so that, for all their hurry, they travel back-foremost through the universe of space. Sometimes it comes by the spirit of delight, and sometimes by the spirit of terror. At least, there will always be hours when we refuse to be put off by the feint of explanation, nicknamed science; and demand instead some palpitating image of our estate, that shall represent the troubled and uncertain element in which we dwell, and satisfy reason by the means of art. Science writes of the world as if with the cold finger of a starfish; it is all true; but what is it when compared to the reality of which it discourses! where

hearts beat high in April, and death strikes, and hills totter in the earthquake, and there is a glamour over all the objects of sight, and a thrill in all noises among men? So we come back to the old myth, and hear the goat-footed piper making the music which is itself the charm and terror of things; and when a glen invites our visiting footsteps, fancy that Pan leads us thither with a gracious tremolo; or when our hearts quail at the thunder of the cataract, tell ourselves that he has stamped his foot in the nigh thicket.

—Robert Louis Stevenson, "Pan's Pipes," in *Virginibus Puerisque*

3

BROWN BREAD

The first time I tried to make brown bread I put too much soda in. When I put it in the oven, in five minutes it went over. That is because I had too much soda. Then I had to get rid of it. The brown bread was quite light. It tasted very bitter. Then I went and showed mother and she said, "We have to have our first trial."

—L.; Scale-Step 4

4

Once I had a game and I could not put it up, so I tried. I tried and at last I had it done.

—L.; Scale-Step 1

5

LIGHTING THE GAS

The sixth time I try to light the gas I try about five times more and then got it by lighted the match first and then turn on the gas. And now I don't have to worry that it will puff up.

—L.; Scale-Step 2

6

DIFFICULT BUT WORTH WHILE

As I trudge into the classroom regularly at a given time and think of the hour of painful suffering ahead for me, I do not realize how necessary it is after all. I do not mean that the painful suffering is necessary, but the work is. I often wonder why I do not get tired of going to school every day. It is because there is always something a little different happening. I learn a little (and sometimes a lot) every day, and as this knowledge accumulates in my head it asserts itself as though filed away. Then I hear something and think about it, and before I know it I am called on in class and find I have forgotten everything. Then a good night's rest (after three hours of study) is the only thing that will straighten things out. These are some of the difficulties of getting educated, but only a few.

But now I look at the other side of it. Just think how poorly a man gets along in the world without some schooling. He never gets anywhere. Now as

I go through all this process of education I say to myself, "Now, isn't it worth while after all?"

—*L.*; Scale-Step 7

7

In order to live the life of night, a watcher must not wake too much. That is, he should not alter so greatly the character of night as to lose the solitude, the visible darkness, or the quietude. The hours of sleep are too much altered when they are filled by lights and crowds; and Nature is cheated so, and evaded, and her rhythm broken, as when larks caged in populous streets make ineffectual springs and sing daybreak songs when the London lamps are lighted. Nature is easily deceived; and the muse, like the lark, may be set all astray as to the hour. You may spend the peculiar hours of sleep amid so much noise and among so many people that you shall not be aware of them; you may thus merely force and prolong the day. But to do this is not to live well both lives; it is not to yield to the daily and nightly rise and fall, cradled in the swing of change.

There surely never was a poet but was now and then rocked in such a cradle of alternate hours. "It cannot be," says Herbert, "that I am he on whom thy tempests fell all night."

—Alice Meynell, "The Hours of Sleep," in *The Spirit of Place*

8

Johnson's writings, which once had such currency and celebrity, are now, as it were, disowned by the young generation. It is not wonderful; Johnson's opinions are fast becoming obsolete: but his style of thinking and of living, we may hope, will never become obsolete. I find in Johnson the indisputablest traces of a great intellect and great heart;—ever welcome, under what obstructions and perversions soever. They are *sincere* words, those of his; he means things by them. A wondrous buckram style,—the best he could get to then; a measured grandiloquence, stepping or rather stalking along in a very solemn way, grown obsolete now; sometimes a tumid *size* of phraseology not in proportion to the contents of it: all this you will put up with. For the phraseology, tumid or not, has always *something within it*. So many beautiful style and books, with *nothing* in them;—a man is a *malefactor* to the world who writes such! *They* are the avoidable kind! Had Johnson left nothing but his *Dictionary*, one might have traced there a great intellect, a genuine man. Looking to its clearness of definition, its general solidity, honesty, insight, and successful method, it may be called the best of all Dictionaries. There is in it a kind of architectural nobleness; it stands there like a great solid square-built edifice, finished, symmetrically complete; you judge that a true Builder did it.

—Thomas Carlyle, "The Hero as a Man of Letters," in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*

9

To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form hab-

its; for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch. What we have to do is to be forever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. "Philosophy is the microscope of thought." The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.

—Walter Pater, "Conclusion," in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*

10

FIXING A BICYCLE

Fixing a bicycle was hard. I took the back wheel off. I took the inner tube out. It was hard to put the wheel on again, because the brake would be in the way.

—L.; Scale-Step 3

11

COVERING A CANOE

The race was only a few days off. Our canoe was not slipping through the water with the same ease (and speed) that she usually did. No amount of painting and "dosing" would help the gallant craft. She undoubtedly needed a new canvas cover, but with the absence of the High Authority on boats and fixing in general we did not dare to attempt the task. Then the Authority's son dared me to re-cover the canoe. I knew he expected me to refuse the dare; so having consulted with Dad about it, I accepted. He was aghast. So was I, only I didn't tell him so. Before evening I had the canvas in the tent and was ready (of course with Dad's aid) to get to business.

To say it was merely hot the next day was useless. Everyone working on the canoe knew it was much more than hot. I won't quote what they said it was. We got to work and spent a warm energetic morning trying to make the canvas fit. It slipped; it wrinkled. Parts of the new canvas wouldn't go on at all.

We gave up a little time to lunch and went at it again. One—two—hours passed. We went for a swim. The cover was all on now but the bow piece, which, stretch as we might, maintained a pained, wrinkled surface. Then, as a last expedient we "doused" it with water and stretched—and stretched, and stretched. Then it went on. On! How it happened we don't know, but it fitted as smoothly as a glove. When the canoe was painted and the raw edges of our work gracefully hidden away, she was put in the water and went like a bird!

—L.; Scale-Step 8.5

12

THAT HAPPIEST MOMENT

One day last summer I decided that I wanted to catch lobsters, because I saw the fishermen coming in with their boats full of lobsters and getting five or six dollars a load. I went to work and made three buoys with my name on them. I took my first lobster trap out in the middle of the cove and dropped it overboard, and to my surprise it floated. Then I remembered seeing the fishermen put stones in their traps, so I got some stones and put them in and threw it overboard.

To my horror the whole thing sank, rope, buoy, and all. I took my second nearer shore. I decided not to put out my third until I saw what luck I had with my second.

The next morning I went out to find that my trap was high and dry on the beach with nothing in it save a crab. It was on the beach because I had set it at high tide. I set the remaining two traps further out this time. When I went out the next morning I pulled up one, with great hopes and expectations. As I pulled it up I saw a lobster in it, but alas! it was so small that I knew I could not sell it. I threw the lobster overboard, disheartened, but I knew I had one more trap, which I pulled, and to my joy I found two good-sized lobsters, and one the biggest I ever saw.

I'll say I was happy. I went to the store and got twenty-five cents for my prizes. That twenty-five cents was the most valuable quarter I ever had because I learned so much in getting it.

—L.; Scale-Step 7.5

13

LEARNING TO RIDE

About ten years ago, a neighbor of mine got his little boy a bicycle. One day he was teaching me to ride. I got so I could ride fairly well and was going down the road, and lost control of the thing and ran off the road and hit a cow. The cow kicked me in the stomach and knocked the wind out of me. I did not ride a bicycle after that until I got one of my own.

—L.; Scale-Step 5

14

IT WAS A SIGHT WORTH SEEING WHEN THE TROOPS
MARCHED PAST

I was down at Fort Snelling. When the Troops marched past. And I saw then drilling to. And we went for a walk down by the river with papa. And I was down town when the Troops marched past. And I saw a lot of people too. And I think I will see Troops of soldiers going home, if they come up my way. And I hope my papa is there.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 3

15

WHEN MOTHER WAS AWAY

Mother had gone to the coast and Father and I, then a boy of ten, were left to play bachelors. Before the cold weather came on we got along nicely. But when the bottle of blueing froze and burst on the shelf and went all over everything we thought of mother. That mean accident seemed to start others for that same evening we put a dish of cold duck in the oven to warm and forgot it and went down town. When we came back about two hours later the house was full of smoke. Father grabbed a big cloth and threw the meat out.

Half an hour later as we sat trying to read, our thots strolled to a small cottage on the sea shore. A week more passed and one evening when we were both gone the house was robbed. We could stand it no longer. The next day two big fat letters sped to Long Beach and two anxious hearts waited mother's return.

Whenever anything goes wrong about the house now we think of a passed winter "When Mother Was Away."

—V. W.; Scale-Step 6.6

16

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

One day as I was sitting in the show the man asked me to collect tictets for the show he said that he would give me fifty cents a week if I collected tictets a week. As I was working a couple a weeks he said I could work as long as I wanted to. As I was working a month he said that he would give me a dollar a week.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 3.3

17

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

When I was on the farm I yousto driv the cows to the passeur and git 1 dollar.

V. W.; Scale-Step .34

18

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

I needed to earn some money so I started to Fire; that is I became a Fireman. I took this job because it gave me experience around machinery and I liked that kind of work.

At first I had to arise very early in the morning that is about half past three, but as time passed I could get steam much quicker in the mornings than previously. Cleaning the flues was a slow and tedious job at first and I think it was because I did not go into it with the right spirit. One morning the engineer accompanied me down to the engine as he was going to put a new valve in the injector. He watched me some time and then he said, "Du er for rad," and he proceeded to show me how he managed it. I began to clean them again and now with a new spirit and courage and it took no time to do it in fact, I cleaned them faster than the engineer himself. At any rate this seemingly insignificant incident taught me a lesson that applies to everything. If you wish to accomplish anything you should go into it with the right spirit and not to stand back for the lack of courage; because it's courage that counts in accomplishing anything.

A job like firing a traction engine might seem a tedious one to those not acquainted with it, because here is such long working days. Most of the time I had only six hours sleep and of course sometimes four or five to suit the occasion. But time never went so fast to me. I was busy all the time, when I wasn't firing I was running, oiling, packing, adjusting and numerous other things. Toward the end of my job I run the engine, "coupled up," "belted up," and practically run the engine when we were thrashing. I remember the first time I was going to "belt up," I thought I was going to do a quick job of it so I put the reverse lever in the last knot forward and away she went. Then I reversed and backed up and I came about one foot out of line. Next time I tried it I done better.

As I have said before many think it a tedious job, but I never felt so healthy and I was as happy as Robin Hood Because when you are busy you are happy.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 6.8

19

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

When I was ten years old I needed some money so I went to father and he told me if I would pick a pail of berries he would reward me with twenty-five cents and if I picked more than one pail he would give me fifty cents for every pail over one.

I took three pails determined to fill them all. I picked first on one bush then on another so by this time I had picked on all the bushes my pail should have been filled but instead it was only one third filled. I sat down in the dust in

discourage but Mother seeing me called out and said, "Dear if you would take one bush at a time pick all of the berries then pass to another you would accomplish your task." Mother had given me new hope so I filled my first pail. I finished the second pail but then it was supper time so the third pail remained empty.

—V. W., Scale-Step 5.9

20

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

At last I had become one of an army of women munition workers in the Russel Motor Company of Toronto. I had been given my time card, had been assigned to my shift, then at work, and had been put into uniform by the forewoman, who took me to Shop C.

Here the deafening noise of cutting steel, the bewildering whirl of wheels, the myriads of belts, and the shouts of foremen were at first appalling; but I soon became accustomed to the task of rapidly inspecting fuze rings. I did this so well, so I was told, that I was promoted to a keyhole machine as operator. I stood before this hideous looking monster and its cruel knives with fear and trembling. About the knives poured constantly an ugly fluid compounded of oil and soap. Urged by competition from my partners in labor, and the need of the cause for which I was earning, I soon became so deft at the work that I averaged forty-five hundred rings a day, which paid me at the rate of seven cents a hundred.

One month later, I was transferred to the oil room where a sickening odor like stale fish prevailed. In these cramped quarters we stood upon a slippery floor all day, washing the fuze rings from huge tubs filled with oil, with our arms in this liquid up to the elbows, while the oil dripped upon us and about us from the hands of our neighbors. Patriotism was tried almost to its limit after six weeks service here. But a transfer to a shell-room saved my service reputation and my promise to the Red Cross.

In the shell-room I was greeted as a fellow worker by the society woman, the laborer's wife, the coarse women of the slums, and the university student, as we guided into place and painted the big eighty-pound shells as they came down the long chute to stop at our machines for attention. How real they seemed! With what precision they slipped into place and out again on their deadly errand! Nothing but a righteous cause could have held us women to this heavy, monotonous work through the long hours, amid the impatient shouts of foreman, and the demands for almost superhuman efforts to achieve a nearly impossible output.

When at last I was released after the three months' time I had offered, there was mingled with the feeling of regret at parting with my companions of the bench and wheel, one of pride that I had been able to earn three hundred and fourteen dollars for the Red Cross Society.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 10.0

21

IT WAS A SIGHT WORTH SEEING WHEN THE TROOPS
MARCHED BY

One day last spring I was down town. As I walked along I heard music. I waited for a while. Soon I saw a company of soldiers. I followed them to the Parade grounds. Here the steeled and the band played after that the soldiers drilled and it would send thrills to any one who was looking on.

That is what I call a sight worth seeing.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 4.0

22

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

I earned my money this way. Sometimes I would take care of babies. Then I would take care of the house and babies both. Some times I would wash dishes. Then I would sweep the floor. Then I would dust the furniture. Some times I would scob the floor. Then I would clean the bathroom.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 2.4

23

WHEN MOTHER WENT AWAY

Mother was going away! One might as well have said that the sky was going to fall, or that the earth was going to cease turning on its axis. Never before had the "bottom" so completely fallen out of things leaving the future a seemingly dark and bottomless pit where we dared not venture.

"Be good," mother warned the little ones. "Take care of them. Be a little mother to the others," she begged of me as she hugged me and turned away.

We stood on the doorstep, a bravely smiling little group as the carriage rolled away bearing mother on the first stage of her long journey to the bedside of poor father. With a queer frightened feeling in my heart, I watched the carriage vanish from sight below the distant hill. My stout fourteen-year-old courage gave way and I dropped to the doorstep, burying my head in my arms. A soft little cheek pressed mine, and baby lips murmured consolingly, "We will be good; please, Polly, don't cry."

Half-laughing, half crying, I hugged that precious three-year-old tight, sprang up, and went to work with a will.

Long, busy days followed; days when things frequently went wrong with the little house-wife and when the tempers of her "family" grew brittle and unruly. Perhaps they were sorely tried with burned biscuits and cakes that fell. Thru it all, baby Joan laughed and chattered reminding the others to "be good and not tease poor Polly." Again and again, her soft arms about my neck kept the tears from falling.

Whatever our day time trials, there came a time in the late summer twilight, when the children gathered for the stories that no one told so well as Polly.

Troubles were forgotten and childish eyes grew wide with wonder at the thrilling adventures of "Alice in Wonderland" or "Jack" of Beanstalk fame. When the tale was ended, prayers were said and the "little mother" tucked her charges in bed, kissed them good-night, and wearily sought her own pillow.

At last came the message that mother would be home that very afternoon. Such rushing and scrambling to put things in perfect order! Such sweeping and dusting and polishing until the house radiated neatness and order, while four happy children radiated joy and satisfaction thru disfiguring coats of grime and dirt! Then such soapy scouring and vigorous combing and brushing until said children emerged shining faced and cleanly clad to wait for mother.

After what seemed endless waiting, twenty minutes by the clock, the carriage rolled into view bearing, not only mother but, joy of joys, father, pale and thin but smiling cheerily! There was a grand rush that threatened to sweep poor father and mother from their feet, but somehow they opened their arms and gathered their children in. Safe at last, within the haven of mother's arms, my troubles over, I found myself laughing and sobbing at once with my tired head on mother's comfortable shoulder.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 9.4

24

IT WAS A SIGHT WORTH SEEING WHEN THE BOYS PASSED BY

It was Dominion Day, and promptly at nine-thirty we were at the curbing on Queen Street as the great parade appeared.

Behind the usual dignitaries of the city who were leading, followed by the Daughters of England, came to the Royal Canadian Dragoons in splendid array, exciting admiration not only for their gay appearance, but for the recent noble work of their advanced guard in Europe and the promise of similar achievements from those now departing. The hoof clatter of the cavalry following rang with almost speaking determination of future work, while the trim mass of the Royal Flying Corps silently expressed the efficiency expected of them. Machine gun sections bespoke the deadly havoc allotted to them, and the dark habits of the Overseas Companies of Queen's Own only accentuated the brilliance of the red and green of the Royal Grenadiers behind them.

This expression of patriotism and justice passed in review before an almost silent crowd with bared heads. Would they not express their appreciation in sound? My Yankee spirit was bursting to cheer, to applaud. The gorgeousness and elan of the celebrated Forty-eighth Highlanders brought a cheer from me, and provoked others from those around me. This demonstration in sound increased as one-thousand of the returned veterans from France passed before us in their worn khaki. It was, indeed, a moment of intense emotion as those who had seen and felt the cruelty of war came and went.

I turned about to find that the crowd of people who had not applauded, had looked their very souls out, and all were in tears. Canada had known and felt war for three years.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 8.9

25

IT WAS A SIGHT WORTH SEEING WHEN THE BOYS
MARCHED PAST

Madge leaned far out over the curb as the khaki column approached. Now and then the figures grew dim in her sight as she watched them march toward her, but she shook her head with a fierce little frown, reminding herself that she had determined to set an example to some of these other "teary" women. The palpably new wedding ring that glistened on her finger had marked her step into womanhood, and she felt herself called upon to set a standard of fearless self-sacrifice for her sex.

It was the remembrance of the responsibility that brought her to look about almost defiantly upon the women who surrounded her, some of whom were already dabbing suspiciously damp handkerchiefs at their eyes. From them she looked down the street again to "the boys." They had almost reached her, the band coming first, with its proud and dignified young baton-master, and all its thirty instruments uniting in a striking march-tune.

Madge noticed them only incidentally; she was interested in the ranks immediately following, for Lawrence was somewhere there. A moment, and her eyes, undimmed now by even a suspicion of tears, picked him out. He was on the outside, next to her. How fortunate, now he would be sure to see her, and know how bravely she was watching him go.

True enough, he did see her in another moment, and their eyes met in a mutual promise to "play the game." Then he looked down at his side, with a glance half-proud, half-laughing, and wholly touched. She strained on tiptoes to follow his glance. There—why it was Bob, Bob, who had whined so pitifully just a few hours before when his loved master had petted him, man-fashion, and then had "shaken hands" with him and left him alone. Bob, the prize bull-dog, of whom Lawrence was so fond that at times Madge was almost jealous. Here was Bob marching now at Lawrence's side, proud to be with him again, hurt that Lawrence should march on so sternly without a word or touch, yet determined to stay by him to the last possible moment, enveloping him, in this strange hour, with loving devotion.

All this Madge saw, and her heart ached as she thought "I know just how Bob feels, poor fellow, as though the whole world had tumbled about his ears." Then it came to her that she was feeling, in human fashion, the same emotions that filled poor Bob's heart. For a moment she envied him his place beside Lawrence; then, in a flash, she had stepped down and joined him, marching on in step with Lawrence. She, too, was a soldier; this was her zero hour, and she faced it, fear conquered, and with a torn heart yielded up unhesitatingly that to which it clung most lovingly—her husband.

Of course her example was followed by a score of others; and so, as the boys marched on past us, it was truly a sight worth seeing—in the center the lads in khaki, their shoulders straightened under the new burden, and on each side a row of girls—women now—walking with firm, unfaltering step, heads up, and faces alight with the glory of their loving sacrifice.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 9.5

26

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

Last summer in harvest time I helped one of the neighbor women do her work for a little over a week.

I did not help her as to get a job, only that I wanted to earn some money myself.

I helped her with the cooking which I enjoyed more than any other part of the work and I rather think she knew I did and that's the reason she let me do it.

As the folks had a car we took several joy rides and this made things more interesting for me. I thought when I was ready to go home that this had been the most pleasure I had ever had in earning some money.

I had several things in mind that I wanted to get with the money but when I did spend it, I never bought what I thought I would and spent it for some clothing and I think it will probably be more beneficial to me then if I would have spend it some way.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 4.9

27

WHEN MOTHER WAS AWAY

I had always secretly yearned to try my hand at culinary arts, and so one day when mother was away, I took advantage of her absence to attempt to bake my first cake. I anticipated with delight the triumph that would be mine when I would produce the cake at dinner time. With a feeling of the utmost confidence I began to mix my ingredients. The butter was very hard, but I decided it would melt in the baking. When I had put the flour in the bowl I realized it needed something to make it wet, and not knowing exactly what to use, I poured into it a sufficient quantity of water and vinegar. After adding four eggs to the mixture I confess I eyed it rather dubiously. To be sure it did not look nor taste exactly like mother's cake batter, but I decided that it would all come out right when it was baked. With a feeling of relief as if of the lifting off of a great responsibility, I put the result of my labors into the oven. I then decided that I would finish a very exciting book while my cake was baking. After some time, even though absorbed in a thrilling chapter I became conscious of a peculiar odor; at first it merely disturbed me vaguely, but finally its meaning dawned upon me. My cake! I flew to the kitchen and in my desperate attempt to rescue my cake and my honor I pulled it out regardless of the fact that it was hot. As I stood surveying the black, smoking mass, a sadder and wiser cook, I decided never again to assert my feeling of independence in the line of baking when mother was away.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 7.6

28

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

I have Earned Some Money with taceig care of Baby I have Earned Some Money for gowing to the stor. I Earned Some Money for gowing and find eggs. I have Earned Some Money for dowing the deshess

—V. W.; Scale-Step 1.56

29

WHEN MOTHER WAS AWAY

Last summer when mother went to Iowa I was left to take care of the house and cook for my father and brother. At that time I didn't know much about managing the house as mother took all that responsibility herself. While she was at home and I did what she told me to do.

I took mother to the train and on the way she told me to be a good girl and do things the way they should be done. She said I would have to make a pie for dinner. At once I said how do you make the crust. Than She told me how to make it also many other thing which she thought I would make while she was gone

When I came home it was time to get the dinner. I made the pie the first and put every thing in it which was needed except the salt which I forgot. I burned my hand when I drained the potatoes which caused great pain. Every thing I made or did, didn't turn out right. At last it was dinner time and my father and brother came in from the feild.

After I had my dishes washed in the afternoon I sat down and made out a list of all the thing I was going to make while mother was gone. I found out how to make each thing from mother cook book. All the rest of the week I made the thing as they should be made.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 5.7

30

HOW I EARNED SOME MONEY

"After death—what?" is not so momentous a question as, "After graduation—what?" is in the opinion of one about to graduate from a high school. I was tired of school that hot dusty June in 1912 and the prospect of going on for another four years appealed not at all to me. In fact my one idea, as the *Ladies Home Journal* has it, was to make money.

I intended taking an examination to enter the service of the public library the following March, and even after a sufficiently long, restful and uneventful vacation there yet remained several months on my hands.

One evening I picked up a paper and saw that a large department store needed clerks. Without a word to my family I went down-town the next morning and applied. I had my choice of departments, and being rather selective anyway I chose the book department. I was enrolled, told where to hang

my wraps, instructed in the mysteries of the time-clock, and then directed to my place. A floor-walker kindly told me when to report in the morning, and gave me a check which I was to cherish as my life or else be docked for appearing without it. He also said that I must wear black.

The store was new and furnished in imitation mahogany; the books were new and many of them very beautiful. The regular customers of a department store who frequent the book section are invariable delightful, and it was not long before I had a veritable clientele, who entrusted me with the truly awful task of finding "a good book for my husband for over Sunday."

The thrilling part of this adventure in storeland was the money question. My feelings upon being presented with my envelope at the end of that first week were and still are indescribable. I was a princess and felt as no Croesus ever could have felt with his unbounded and unearned millions.

—V. W.; Scale-Step 8.2

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